

NPBRT Meeting Minutes 1-19-10
NFS Conf. Room (3-5PM)
100 Main Street, Walden, CO

Members Present

*Mike Allnutt
Deb Alpe
Mike Alpe
* Jimmer Baller
Paula Belcher
Pete Conovitz
*Kent Crowder
Greg Johnson
*John Rich
Ann Timberman
*Barbara Vasquez
*Ty Wattenberg
*Rick Wyatt

Members Absent

*Hal Hagan
*Kay Meyring
*Tom Hackleman
*Mike Honholz
*Sandy Knox
*Dirk Ramsey
(* Voting members, total 13)

Guests Present

Marti Aitken
Amy Beatie
Robin Blake
Liz Schnakenberg
Carl Trick II
Jacob Bornstein
Denise Culver
Kelly Elder
Deb Heeney
Rick Henderson
Matt Hoobler
Rob Hubbard
Brook Lee
Matt Reddy
Chuck Rhoades
Shanna Schalnus
Kara Sobieski
Jeff Streeter
Bob Timberman
Kincaid Waldron

I. 12-8-09 Meeting Minutes: It was moved by John Rich and seconded by Rick Wyatt to accept the 12-8-09 meeting minutes as written.

II. Review of agenda: accepted as published

**III. Kelly Elder, Chuck Rhoades & Rob Hubbard, Fraser Experimental Forest-
Status Report: Effects of Mountain Pine Beetle and Forest Management on Water
Quantity, Quality & Forest Recovery – North Platte Basin**

Kelly, Chuck and Rob presented an interim report on the WSRA funded project. The first year's work consisted of preparing sites with different treatments to study the impact on runoff water quantity/quality next spring/summer. There are 4 locations: Fraser Exp. Forest, Gore Pass, Willow Creek Pass and State Forest. Each site has the same standard design with 3 (30x30m) plots with different surface roughness to be compared to a 4th plot with no treatment. There is no opportunity to have a true control, i.e., green trees because the beetle impact has been so large. The small size of the plots was dictated by what was possible at the State Forest site, where the necessary NEPA had already been completed. All the plots are laid out and most of the instrumentation is in place, including soil T and moisture

measurement equipment. The team will be measuring snow depth this winter in advance of the spring melt-off. At Fraser (only) studies have been done on seedling recruitment. It shows the clear-cut areas having a larger proportion of lodgepole and aspen than the uncut areas. Carl asked whether the team thought there'd be any difference in the forests where cut/uncut in 50-100 years. Chuck commented that the cut areas would mimic regeneration after a fire.

There is a parallel project that's been underway since the '70s at Fraser studying the impact of forest management on birds in the forest. And of course, as the beetle kill progresses, this study will tell us about the impact to bird species.

The stream nitrate load has been monitored at Fraser. The stream-borne nitrate rises in the first 5 years because it's not taken up by the (dead or missing) trees, but is washed out by the spring runoff. The dead needles don't contribute much...it's whether the nitrate in the soil is pulled up by the live vegetation. It declines again as the site supports succession growth.

Note that their PowerPoint material is too large to send by email. However, if you would like a copy, please contact Barbara Vasquez.

IV. Denise Culver & John Sowell, CNHP-Final Report: Identification and Assessment of Important Wetlands in the North Platte Watershed

Denise Culver presented a summary of the final report for the WSRA funded Wetlands study in North Park. Access was granted to 13 private properties, representing over 45% of the North Platte Basin area. The goals included 1) contribute an update of wetland-related environmental attributes to the NPBRT Non-consumptive Needs Assessment, 2) identify and assess biologically significant wetlands in the North Platte River Watershed, 3) prioritize private lands due to lack of wetland data & 4) digitize National Wetland Inventory Maps. The results will allow the NPBRT NCNA committee to update the wetland plant community and amphibian attribute maps for the Basin.

The WSRA funded study reported 21 wetland plants including a county record, 3 amphibians – including one new population of boreal toad, 36 wetland plant communities– including 3 new fen locations. Copies of the final report in notebook form are available for viewing at the Jackson County Library, the office of Jackson County Administrator, North Park High School (Matt Landis) and ANWR main office. It includes very interesting background information on the North Platte Basin geology and biology in addition to the findings of this Wetlands Inventory. Feedback from Matt Landis is that it's been very useful in his science classes. Soft copy can be accessed on the Internet at:

http://www.cnhp.colostate.edu/download/documents/2010/NorthPlatteReport_Jan20.pdf

Denise commented that the North Park represents the best in Colorado for contiguous riparian willow habitat. Potential Conservation Areas (PCAs) were highlighted by CNHP including Big Creek Lakes, Chedsey Creek and Arapaho Lakes PCAs—only place in Colorado to support all 3 montane amphibians (Northern Leopard Frog, Wood Frog and Boreal Toad). Sawmill Lakes, Big Creek Lakes, Willow Park PCAs--encompass floating mat fens. Illinois River and Reservoir PCA--1 of 3 known breeding sites for American White Pelican and largest population for Willet. Colorado and Little Grizzly Creek PCAs--one of the largest nesting populations for Sandhill Crane in Colorado. Finally, CNHP data licenses have been executed between Jackson County, CDM and Barbara Vasquez that give them access to the GIS layers generated in this study for further use within the Basin.

CNHP will be conducting a second wetlands study in North Park funded by EPA and CDOW (field work next season) and the NPBRT will receive a report from that study as well.

V. Matt Reddy, DU – WSRA Funding application: Irrigated Meadows Conservation Project

The proposal forwarded by DU included a preliminary study/site selection preamble followed by a construction phase for selected sites. The overall goal is to add to the irrigated hay meadows with existing water rights, which benefit both irrigated agriculture and waterfowl habitat. The total requested as \$100,000 from WSRA, to be matched by funds from three other organizations, NAWCA, CDOW and Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund (all pending). The project is the first to come before the RT that attempts to combine consumptive/non-consumptive benefits. There were comments from NPBRT members on several aspects of the application, including:

- the desire to see more specifics of what will be built
(i.e., development of water right moving from S Fork Big Creek to Lake Creek sub-basins)
- concern about funding a ‘study’
(would rather see the money spent on projects on the ground)
- concerns about balancing benefits/risks of specific sub-projects, which DU is in a good position to accomplish
(i.e. substantial depletion of S Fork Big Creek at detriment of existing wetlands and fisheries in that sub-basin)

Matt had already gotten some of this feedback prior to this meeting, and had withdrawn the original application. There was some discussion about trying to put some kind of decision point between study/site selection and construction so the RT would have a green/red light authority at that juncture. Jacob Bornstein commented that this kind of structure would be very hard to implement for a WSRA funded project. Carl Trick strongly advised DU to return with a phased approach. Matt Reddy, DU, said he’d return next month with Phase 1 (study/site selection) application for discussion. It was determined that in order to meet the timeline requirements for CWCB funding decision in May, the NPBRT vote would need to occur in the 2nd week of March. The NPBRT agreed to shift their meeting schedule to accommodate this timeline.

V. New Business- Set Next Meeting: Tuesday, Feb 16, (3-5PM, FS Conference Room). The March meeting has already been set for Mar. 9 to meet the timeline required for the DU application “Irrigated Meadows Conservation Program” to be considered at the May meeting of the CWCB “ for WSRA funding.